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Nicolo Santilli

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DELIVERANCE OF DREAMS

by

Nicolo Santilli

The wolves ran swiftly
over the gently undulating ground,
the wind stirring their grey fir,
tall pine trees casting stark shadows
across their path
and fleeing forms.

Salaïessen's awareness moved among them
like a fleeting ghost,
sensing the swiftly passing world through their shadowed eyes,
following intricate scent streams woven through trees
and leaf scattered ground.

At times the twilight landscape would resound with distant howls,
and one of the running wolves would take up the call,
conveying with his resonant voice and intonation
a subtle message,
received and transmitted down a long line of running wolves
interspersed over miles of ground.

With each howl and response
Salaïessen's consciousness would leap from wolf to wolf,
landscape to landscape,
now watching flickering flames dance among the huts of a village,
now reaching the snowline and skirting caves
heavy with the scent of bear.

A snowy owl passed overhead
and he felt her familiar dual consciousness,
spreading messages from flight to flight,
from tall tree to moonlit sky,
and further afield to the silver woods,
from which a vast pulsing and receptive dream
continually emanated.

And then he stood alone on a lofty pinnacle of stone
surveying the vast twilight landscape
with his own sea green eyes,
looking up and seeing above him
a familiar grey hawk form,
descending in arching spiral flight
and alighting on his outstretched wrist,
now silver grey and dragon scaled,
with silver flashing eyes and lashing tale.

“The forest is aroused,
the river is flooded,
the fair folk have summoned a storm,
and dragons fly,”
she showed him in flashing succession,
the images vivid,
and traced with the thought of other minds
echoing distant visions and messages.

Finally he saw before his inner vision
a great host of marching men,
their torches flaming in the growing dusk,
and their metal weapons shining in the torch light.

Even as their vanguard emerged from the narrow gorge
and caught sight of the river and the forested slopes beyond,
a great surge of wind and snow assailed their host,
and stones began to tumble down from the high cliffs
that flanked their rear passage.

Soon the whole host was arrayed
on the snowy windswept plain,
and tents and shelters were hastily erected
amid shouts and curses,
and shiverings with cold and fear.

Then as night fell,
a dark dream arose from the forest,
moving like a tapestry of mist and smoke,
and descended on the sheltering encampment,
bringing to each a cold fear,
a thought of home,
and the threat of imminent madness.

Wolves howled amid the wind of the howling storm
and men dreamed of home and loved ones,
or writhed in night terrors,
battling desperately with invisible forms
that bent their thoughts and wills upon return.

Bending his eye to the future,
Salaïessen beheld an empty snow swept plane,
and beyond the stony gorge,
scattered fleeing forms,
blades sparkling in dawn light
beneath the flight of swooping dragons,
scales shimmering more brightly than steel.